Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

This guidance applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal patterns for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. For information on the meal patterns and crediting foods for grades K-12, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) webpages, Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs and Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs.



Effective July 1, 2022, the USDA's final rule, *Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium* (87 FR 6984), requires that at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast must be WGR. For guidance on meeting the WGR criteria for school meals refer to the CSDE's guide, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

Grains that are not WGR must be enriched. For guidance on the crediting requirements for enriched grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP*.



Documentation for Weekly WGR Requirement

School food authorities (SFAs) must document that at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast are WGR. This documentation must be maintained on file for the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

CSDE worksheet for calculating the weekly WGR percentage

SFAs may calculate the weekly menu's percentage of WGR grains using the CSDE's Excel worksheet, Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12. SFAs that do not use this worksheet must maintain alternate documentation using the "Steps for Calculating the Weekly Percentage of WGR Menu Items" below.

Steps for Calculating the Weekly Percentage of WGR Menu Items

The determination of whether a weekly lunch or breakfast menu offers at least 80 percent WGR grains is based on the total ounce equivalents of all grain items offered with all menu choices during the week. The three steps to calculate the weekly WGR percentage of school menus are summarized below.

SFAs must calculate the weekly percentage of WGR menu items **separately** for lunch and breakfast.

Step 1: Determine the total ounce equivalents of all offered grain items (WGR and enriched)

Add the ounce equivalents for each creditable grain menu item (WGR and enriched) for all daily meal choices during the week. For example, Monday's lunch menu offers three daily grain choices: 1½ ounce equivalents of a whole-wheat roll (WGR); 2 ounce equivalents of brown rice (WGR); and 1 ounce equivalent of enriched crackers. This daily menu provides a total of 4½ ounce equivalents of grains (WGR and enriched).

The USDA allows two methods for determining the ounce equivalents of a creditable grain product or standardized recipe. SFAs may use either method but must document how the crediting information was obtained.

- Method 1 uses the USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*, to determine the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the product or recipe belongs. This method is used for commercial grain products. It may also be used for standardized recipes if the SFA knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*, lists the Exhibit A grain ounce equivalents that apply to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12.
- Method 2 determines the ounce equivalents from the weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. This method is used for standardized recipes and may also be used for commercial grain products that have a PFS stating the weight of creditable grains per serving. The grams of creditable grains are listed in the commercial product's PFS or calculated from the grain quantities in the SFA's recipe.

- For some commercial grain products, method 2 is required. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.
- SFAs are not required to use either crediting method if the product has a Child Nutrition (CN) label. CN-labeled products credit based on the stated crediting information for grain ounce equivalents.

SFAs must maintain documentation to demonstrate each grain menu item's ounce equivalents contribution and if it is WGR. For commercial grain products, this includes the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients statement, and may also require a CN label (if the grain is part of a meat/meat alternate product) or product formulation statement (PFS). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Product Formulation Statements* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP*.

For foods made from scratch, a standardized recipe is required. For more information, refer to the "Crediting Foods Made from Scratch" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Step 2: Determine the total ounce equivalents of all offered WGR items

Add the ounce equivalents for each WGR grain menu item for all daily meal choices during the week. For example, Monday's lunch menu offers three daily grain choices: 1½ ounce equivalents of a whole-wheat roll (WGR); 2 ounce equivalents of brown rice (WGR); and 1 ounce equivalent of enriched crackers. This daily menu provides a total of 3½ ounce equivalents of WGR grains.

Step 3: Determine the percentage of WGR grains offered during the week

Divide the total ounce equivalents of all WGR grain menu items (from step 2) by the total ounce equivalents of all grain menu items (from step 1); then multiply by 100.

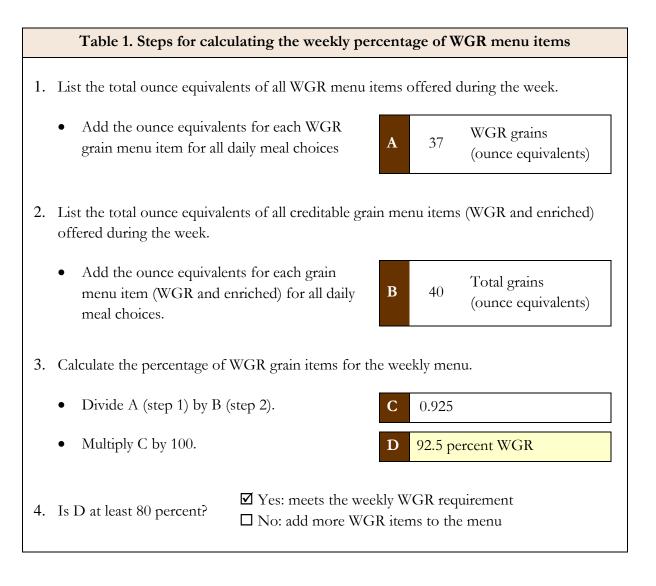








Table 1 shows a sample calculation of the weekly percentage of WGR menu items. This weekly menu provides 37 ounce equivalents of WGR menu items and 3 ounce equivalents of enriched menu items, for a total of 40 ounce equivalents from all grain menu items. This menu meets the weekly WGR requirement because 92.5 percent of all offered weekly grains are WGR.



Percentage of Weekly WGR Menu Items versus Weekly Grains Requirement

It is important to note that calculating the percentage of weekly WGR menu items is different from calculating the minimum weekly meal pattern requirements for the grains component for each grade group. If the menu offers multiple daily grain choices, the menu planner must use the daily grain choice with the **smallest** ounce equivalents to determine if the menu meets the weekly meal pattern requirement. However, to determine the percentage of weekly WGR menu items, the menu planner must add the ounce equivalents for **all** daily grain choices.

Table 2 shows how these requirements apply to a lunch menu for grades 6-8.

Table 2. How to calculate total weekly grains versus percentage of WGR menu items

The lunch meal pattern for grades 6-8 requires at least 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component per day and at least 8 ounce equivalents per week. The school lunch menu offers a daily choice of two different grain menu items:

- 1½ ounce equivalents (enriched)
- 2 ounce equivalents (WGR)

Weekly meal pattern requirement	Weekly WGR requirement		
The menu planner must count the smaller menu item (1½ ounce equivalents) toward the weekly meal pattern requirement for the grains component.	The menu planner must add both menu items together to get the total ounce equivalents of all grain items (WGR and enriched) offered for the day (3½ ounce equivalents).		









Table 3 shows an example of how to calculate the total weekly ounce equivalents of grains and the weekly percentage of WGR menu items for a lunch menu for grades 6-8.

Table 3. Sample calculation of total weekly grain ounce equivalents and weekly WGR percentage for grades 6-8

The lunch meal pattern for grades 6-8 requires at least 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component per day and at least 8 ounce equivalents per week. This menu meets the meal pattern requirements because each daily grain choice provides at least 1 ounce equivalent and the menu provides 9 ounce equivalents over the week based on the smallest grain choice offered each day (2 ounce equivalents on days 1, 2, 4, and 5, and 1 ounce equivalent on day 3).

This menu also meets the weekly WGR requirement. The menu offers 20 ounce equivalents of grain items during the week and 17. 5 ounce equivalents (87.5 percent) are WGR.

Grain items (all menu choices)	Serving size	Grain group 1	Ounce equivalents		
			WGR	Enriched	
Day 1: Whole-wheat bread	2 slices	В	2	0	
Day 1: WGR pasta	1 cup	Н	2	0	
Day 2: Whole-wheat dinner roll	2 ounces	В	2	0	
Day 2: Brown rice	1 cup	Н	2	0	
Day 3: WGR breading on chicken nuggets	0.8 ounce	A	1	0	
Day 3: WGR crackers	4 crackers (1.2 ounces)	A	1.5	0	
Day 4: Enriched cornbread, school recipe	3 ounces	С	0	2.5	
Day 4: Enriched croutons	1.6 ounces	A	2	0	
Day 5: WGR pizza crust	3 ounces	В	3	0	
Day 5: WGR hamburger bun	2 ounces	В	2	0	
Total ounce equivalents per week		17.5	2.5		
Percentage			87.5%	12.5%	10

¹ Refer to the CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.*

Resources

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Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
   https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/
   Accepting_Procssed_Product_Documentation_SNP.pdf
Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP
   (CSDE):
   https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/
   Grain_Calculation_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf
Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
   https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/
   Credit_Cereals_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf
Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
   https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/
   Credit_Enriched_Grains_SNP.pdf
Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
   https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf
Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
   https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/
   Grains_Oz_Eq_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf
Grains Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE webpage):
   https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/
   Documents#Grains
Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
   https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents
Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades
   K-12 (CSDE):
   https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/
   WGR_Requirement_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf
Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
   https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals
Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs
   (USDA):
   https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/
   PFS_Grains_Oz_Eq_Fillable_508.pdf
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Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product_Formulation_Statements.pdf

Recipe Analysis Workbook (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/Resources_School_Meal_Patterns_grades_K-12.pdf

Standardized Recipes ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#StandardizedRecipes

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf

USDA Memo SP 05-2022: Meal Requirements Under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Questions and Answers for Program Operators Updated to Support the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Effective July 1, 2022: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/sp052022-questions-answers-program-operators

USDA Memo SP 30-2012: Grain Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program:

https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/grain-requirements-national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program

Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/whole-grain-resource-national-school-lunch-and-breakfast-programs

Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Worksheet_Calculating_WGR_Percentage_SNP_grades_K-12.xlsx

Yield Study Data Form for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Yield_Study_Form.pdf



For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, School Health, Nutrition and Family Services, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Calculate_WGR_Percentage_SNP.pdf.

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- mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- 2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- 3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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